



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Felony Sales Tax Theft Charges Filed Against Everett Retailer**

**OLYMPIA, Wash., Jan. 25, 2006** — The owner of a business that once operated 10 "Seen On Screen" kiosks in malls across Washington has been charged with 48 felony counts of theft of sales tax and filing false state tax returns.

The charges against Antoine G. Jarjour, 50, of Everett were filed in Snohomish County Superior Court by the State Attorney General's Office at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue and with the assistance of the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. An arrest warrant was issued for Jarjour and bail was initially set at \$500,000.

If convicted on all charges, Jarjour could be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine, plus restitution.

According to the charging papers, Jarjour's business, Meray, Inc., reported less than half of the taxable retail sales his business made from 2001 until it closed in 2004. The kiosks sold various products often seen on TV advertising infomercials. The charging papers allege that Jarjour remitted less than \$339,000 of \$728,000 in sales tax his business collected from 2001 through 2004.

At the present time, the state is basing the charges on approximately \$125,000 in evaded taxes, though it expects to seek full restitution of any unpaid taxes dating back to the mid-90s when the businesses first began operating in malls across Western Washington.

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